

We claim:

1. A method comprising:

determining which drivers are needed for devices on client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during vendor-
5 specified operating system installation on the client computing systems;

creating entries for the drivers within a master driver file; and,

for each client computing system, creating references within an unattended installation file for the client computing system to the entries for the drivers of the devices for the client computing system within the master driver file.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining which drivers are needed for the devices on the client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during operating system installation comprises determining which drivers are needed for mass storage devices on the client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during vendor-
15 specified operating system installation.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining which drivers are needed for the devices on the client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during operating system installation comprises remotely scanning hardware on the client computing systems to learn of the devices that are not
20 automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during operating system installation.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein creating entries for the drivers within the master driver file comprises creating entries for the drivers within the master driver file that are not already present within the master driver file.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein creating entries for the drivers within the master driver file comprises creating entries for the drivers within the master driver file as stored on a server computing system.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising copying the master driver file to each client computing system, wherein creating references within the unattended installation file for each client computing system to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file comprises creating the references to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file as copied to the client computing system.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein copying the master driver file to each client computing system comprises copying the master driver file in its entirety to each client computing system.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein copying the master driver file to each client computing system comprises, for each client computing system, copying only those parts of the master driver file that include the entries for the drivers that are needed for the devices on the client computing system.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising, for each client computing system, copying the drivers that are needed for the devices on the client computing system to the client computing system.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising remotely installing operating systems on the client computing systems in an unattended manner, where the drivers of the devices for the client computing systems are able to be installed in the unattended manner due to the references created within the unattended installation files to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the master driver file is a text mode driver file.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the unattended installation file for each client computing system is an operating system installation answer file for the client computing system.

13. A method comprising:

determining which drivers are needed for devices on client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during vendor-specified operating system installation on the client computing systems;

creating entries for the drivers within a master driver file that are not already present within the master driver file as stored on a server computing system;

copying the master driver file to each client computing system;

copying the drivers that are needed for the devices on each client computing system

to the client computing system;

for each client computing system, creating references within an unattended installation file for the client computing system to the entries for the drivers of the devices for the client computing system within the master driver file as copied to the client computing system; and,

remotely installing operating systems on the client computing systems in an unattended manner, where the drivers of the devices for the client computing systems are able to be installed in the unattended manner due to the references created within the unattended installation files to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the devices on client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed on the client computing systems during vendor-specified operating system installation on the client computing systems are mass storage devices.

15. A system comprising:

a plurality of client computing systems, each client computing system having one or more devices that are not automatically found and installed thereon during vendor-specified operating system installation; and,

a server computing system having stored thereon a master driver file within which entries for drivers for the devices of each client computing system are created,

wherein each client computing system has an unattended installation file within

which the server computing system creates references to the entries for the drivers of the devices for the client computing system within the master driver file.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the one or more drivers of each client computing system that are not automatically found and installed thereon during vendor-specified
5 operating system installation comprise mass storage devices.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein each client computing system has a copy of the master driver file after entries for the drivers for the devices of the client computing system are created therein.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein each client computing system has copied thereto by
10 the server computing system drivers for the devices referenced in the unattended installation file of the client computing system.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein the master driver file is a text mode driver file and the unattended installation file for each client computing system is an operating system installation answer file for the client computing system.

15 20. A server computing system communicatively connected to a plurality of client computing systems comprising:

means for determining which drivers are needed for devices on the client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed thereon during vendor-specified operating system installation;

means for creating entries for the drivers within a master driver file; and,

means for creating references for each client computing system within an unattended installation file for the client computing system to the entries for the drivers of the devices for the client computing system within the master driver file.

5 21. The system of claim 20, further comprising:

means for copying the master driver file to each client computing system; and,

means for copying the drivers that are needed for the devices on each client computing system thereto.

22. The system of claim 20, further comprising means for remotely installing operating

10 systems on the client computing systems in an unattended manner, where the drivers of the devices for the client computing systems are able to be installed in the unattended manner due to the references created within the unattended installation files to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file.

23. An article of manufacture comprising:

15 a computer-readable medium; and,

means in the medium for creating entries within a master driver file for drivers that are needed for devices on client computing systems that are not automatically found and installed thereon during vendor-specified operating system installation and for creating references for each client computing system within an unattended installation file for the client computing system to the entries for the drivers of the devices for the client computing system within the master driver file.

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24. The article of claim 23, wherein the means is further for copying the master driver file to each client computing system and for copying the drivers that are needed for the devices on each client computing system thereto.

25. The article of claim 23, wherein the means is further for remotely installing operating
5 systems on the client computing systems in an unattended manner, where the drivers of the devices for the client computing systems are able to be installed in the unattended manner due to the references created within the unattended installation files to the entries for the drivers of the devices within the master driver file.